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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1       SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to allow graduate  
2 students employed by the University of Hawaii to collectively  
3 bargain.

4       SECTION 2. Section 89-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
5 amended as follows:

6       1. By amending subsection (a) to read:

7       "(a) All employees throughout the State within any of the  
8 following categories shall constitute an appropriate bargaining  
9 unit:

- 10       (1) Nonsupervisory employees in blue collar positions;  
11       (2) Supervisory employees in blue collar positions;  
12       (3) Nonsupervisory employees in white collar positions;  
13       (4) Supervisory employees in white collar positions;  
14       (5) Teachers and other personnel of the department of  
15 education under the same pay schedule, including part-  
16 time employees working less than twenty hours a week  
17 who are equal to one-half of a full-time equivalent;



- 1 (6) Educational officers and other personnel of the  
2 department of education under the same pay schedule;  
3 (7) Faculty of the University of Hawaii and the community  
4 college system;  
5 (8) Personnel of the University of Hawaii and the  
6 community college system, other than faculty;  
7 (9) Registered professional nurses;  
8 (10) Institutional, health, and correctional workers;  
9 (11) Firefighters;  
10 (12) Police officers;  
11 (13) Professional and scientific employees, who cannot be  
12 included in any of the other bargaining units; ~~and~~  
13 (14) State law enforcement officers and state and county  
14 ocean safety and water safety officers[-]; and  
15 (15) Graduate student assistants employed by the University  
16 of Hawaii."

17 2. By amending subsection (d) to read:

18 "(d) For the purpose of negotiating a collective  
19 bargaining agreement, the public employer of an appropriate  
20 bargaining unit shall mean the governor together with the  
21 following employers:



1 (1) For bargaining units (1), (2), (3), (4), (9), (10),  
2 (13), and (14), the governor shall have six votes and  
3 the mayors, the chief justice, and the Hawaii health  
4 systems corporation board shall each have one vote if  
5 they have employees in the particular bargaining unit;

6 (2) For bargaining units (11) and (12), the governor shall  
7 have four votes and the mayors shall each have one  
8 vote;

9 (3) For bargaining units (5) and (6), the governor shall  
10 have three votes, the board of education shall have  
11 two votes, and the superintendent of education shall  
12 have one vote; and

13 (4) For bargaining units (7) ~~[and]~~, (8), and (15), the  
14 governor shall have three votes, the board of regents  
15 of the University of Hawaii shall have two votes, and  
16 the president of the University of Hawaii shall have  
17 one vote.

18 Any decision to be reached by the applicable employer group  
19 shall be on the basis of simple majority, except when a  
20 bargaining unit includes county employees from more than one



1 county. In that case, the simple majority shall include at  
2 least one county."

3 3. By amending subsection (f) to read:

4 "(f) The following individuals shall not be included in  
5 any appropriate bargaining unit or be entitled to coverage under  
6 this chapter:

7 (1) Elected or appointed official;

8 (2) Member of any board or commission; provided that  
9 nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit a member of a  
10 collective bargaining unit from serving on a governing  
11 board of a charter school, on the state public charter  
12 school commission, or as a charter school authorizer  
13 established under chapter 302D;

14 (3) Top-level managerial and administrative personnel,  
15 including the department head, deputy or assistant to  
16 a department head, administrative officer, director,  
17 or chief of a state or county agency or major  
18 division, and legal counsel;

19 (4) Secretary to top-level managerial and administrative  
20 personnel under paragraph (3);



- 1       (5) Individual concerned with confidential matters  
2       affecting employee-employer relations;
- 3       (6) Part-time employee working less than twenty hours per  
4       week, except part-time employees included in unit  
5       (5) [7] and part-time graduate student assistants  
6       employed by the University of Hawaii;
- 7       (7) Temporary employee of three months' duration or less;
- 8       (8) Employee of the executive office of the governor or a  
9       household employee at Washington Place;
- 10      (9) Employee of the executive office of the lieutenant  
11      governor;
- 12      (10) Employee of the executive office of the mayor;
- 13      (11) Staff of the legislative branch of the State;
- 14      (12) Staff of the legislative branches of the counties,  
15      except employees of the clerks' offices of the  
16      counties;
- 17      (13) Any commissioned and enlisted personnel of the Hawaii  
18      national guard;
- 19      (14) Inmate, kokua, patient, ward, or student of a state  
20      institution;



1 (15) Student help[+], except a graduate student assistant  
2 employed by the University of Hawaii;

3 (16) Staff of the Hawaii labor relations board;

4 (17) Employees of the Hawaii national guard youth challenge  
5 academy; or

6 (18) Employees of the office of elections."

7 SECTION 3. Section 89-11, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
8 amended by amending subsection (d) to read as follows:

9 "(d) If an impasse exists between a public employer and  
10 the exclusive bargaining representative of bargaining unit (1),  
11 nonsupervisory employees in blue collar positions; bargaining  
12 unit (5), teachers and other personnel of the department of  
13 education; [~~or~~] bargaining unit (7), faculty of the University  
14 of Hawaii and the community college system[+]; or bargaining  
15 unit (15), graduate student assistants employed by the  
16 University of Hawaii, the board shall assist in the resolution  
17 of the impasse as follows:

18 (1) Voluntary mediation. During the first twenty days of  
19 the date of impasse, either party may request the  
20 board to assist in a voluntary resolution of the  
21 impasse by appointing a mediator or mediators,



1 representative of the public from a list of qualified  
2 persons maintained by the board;

3 (2) Mediation. If the impasse continues more than twenty  
4 days, the board shall appoint a mediator or mediators  
5 representative of the public from a list of qualified  
6 persons maintained by the board, to assist the parties  
7 in a voluntary resolution of the impasse. The board  
8 may compel the parties to attend mediation, reasonable  
9 in time and frequency, until the fiftieth day of  
10 impasse. Thereafter, mediation shall be elective with  
11 the parties, subject to the approval of the board;

12 (3) Report of the board. The board shall promptly report  
13 to the appropriate legislative body or bodies the  
14 following circumstances as each occurs:

15 (A) The date of a tentative agreement and whether the  
16 terms thereof are confidential between the  
17 parties;

18 (B) The ratification or failure of ratification of a  
19 tentative agreement;

20 (C) The signing of a tentative agreement;

21 (D) The terms of a tentative agreement; or



1 (E) On or about the fiftieth day of impasse, the  
2 failure of mediation.

3 The parties shall provide the board with the requisite  
4 information; and

5 (4) After the fiftieth day of impasse, the parties may  
6 resort to ~~[such]~~ other remedies that are not  
7 prohibited by any agreement pending between them,  
8 other provisions of this chapter, or any other law."

9 SECTION 4. This Act does not affect rights and duties that  
10 matured, penalties that were incurred, and proceedings that were  
11 begun before its effective date.

12 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed  
13 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

14 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2091.





**Report Title:**

Collective Bargaining; Graduate Student Assistants

**Description:**

Establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed at the University of Hawaii. (HB1940 HD1)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*





# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at 2:00 p.m.

By  
Risa E. Dickson  
Vice President for Academic Affairs  
University of Hawai'i System

### HB 1940 HD1 – RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

We hereby provide the following testimony on House Bill 1940 House Draft 1 – Relating to Collective Bargaining which proposes to amend Hawai'i Revised Statutes §89-6, to create a new bargaining unit 15 entitled "Graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii."

The University opposes this measure.

**"...graduate student assistants are students first and employees second."** This statement, from Governor's Message No. 1328, dated July 13, 2015 articulates one of the concerns and issues raised in Governor David Ige's *Statement of Objections to House Bill 553 which he vetoed in 2015*. The current bill continues to be objectionable because it is still incomplete and potentially causes legal and administrative problems. A student graduate assistantship is not a career position within government service, unlike all other employees in the established fourteen (14) collective bargaining units under HRS, §89-6. There will be significant cost increases to both the University and the State of Hawai'i should graduate student assistants become employees with the right to collectively bargain. These costs could extend to include, but would not be limited to additional pension contribution costs and possible increases in health benefit costs. The current levels of compensation for graduate student assistants are competitive when tuition waivers, monetary stipends, and other benefits are taken into account. Graduate student assistants with 50% appointments are eligible for the same health and benefit plans (medical, prescription drugs, dental, vision and life insurance) as state employees. Graduate assistants who are full-time students are exempt from the FICA tax.

As noted in prior testimonies, the legislature, University of Hawai'i, and state tax payers must consider several issues when deliberating on the approach to allow university employed graduate student assistants to be included in collective bargaining.

First, from an employment perspective, the University's graduate student assistants are unlike any other employees of the State. Graduate student assistants are students employed as part of their education and training. Graduate student assistants are mentored and supervised by rank 3, 4, and 5 faculty members who hold a terminal degree such as a Ph.D. and have professional mastery in teaching and/or professional work in their respective academic disciplines. The role of a University faculty mentor is to teach graduate assistants how to engage the disciplinary subject matter with the goal of preparing them to find employment as academic professionals with competitive knowledge and skills in the discipline subject matter, and to position them to make contributions in their disciplines at national and international levels. A graduate student assistantship is a form of on-the-job training or apprenticeship training program with the purpose of mentoring a student with the explicit goal of increasing their competitiveness as they enter their professional academic career. A graduate assistantship is a time bound activity, lasting only as long as a student is enrolled in a graduate program.

Second, the State of Hawai'i and the University of Hawai'i must somberly consider the financial implications of including student employees such as graduate student assistants in the State's public sector collective bargaining law. There will be significant cost increases for both the University and the State of Hawai'i should the Legislature decide that graduate student assistants are indeed employees with a right to collectively bargain. Graduate student assistants of the University are currently compensated via a package that includes a variety of benefits. University graduate student assistants receive tuition waivers valued between \$593 to \$1,770 per credit hour, per semester, depending upon if they are a Hawai'i resident or an out of state student. For example, UH Mānoa full time resident graduate student tuition ranges between \$7,116 and \$11,196 per semester while non-resident tuition ranges between \$17,160 and \$21,240 per semester. Graduate student assistants may also receive a monetary stipend that varies by the educational program in which they are enrolled. The current level of compensation is a significant cost to the University and a significant amount of the financial assistance provided to graduate student assistants

Third, because mandatory subjects of bargaining covers wages, hours, conditions of employment and fringe benefits, all such subjects shall now become "cost items" subject to legislative appropriations pursuant to HRS, §89-10(b). For example, membership in the State Employees' Retirement System as provided to employees in Chapter 88, HRS, will add pension contribution costs to the State and the employee. An increase in enrollment in the Employer-Union Trust Fund for health insurance benefits will increase expenses for the University for contributions, and to the State for total liability of the system. Additionally, all collectively bargained compensation may be treated as wages that will be subject to employment and income taxes – an issue graduate assistants may not be considering as it relates to the value of tuition waivers. The Legislature must consider the additional expenses incurred above the current operational costs in the creation of a 15th bargaining unit. Adding collective bargaining components to graduate student assistants, who are first and foremost students and employed as an extension

of their student experience at the University, will increase State general fund demand while simultaneously increasing University operational expenses.

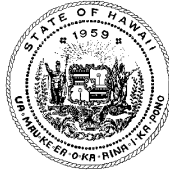
Finally, since last legislative session, University of Hawai'i President Lassner met with representatives of the UH Mānoa Graduate Student Organization (GSO) in both July and October 2015. To address the GSO concerns, the administration has been working with the chief academic officers and the UH Mānoa Office Graduate Education on a proposed revision to the procedures that addresses the GSO concerns. Among the items up for consideration are one year appointments and renewals instead of semester appointments as appropriate, earlier renewal date notifications, reminding supervisors to consider advance to next step on salary schedule for exemplary performance, recognition of the need for outside employment for many students, and work schedule adjustments for illness or emergency situations.

The Legislature must consider the current tuition waivers and compensation paid to graduate student assistants who are first and foremost students and employed as an extension of their student experience at the University. The proposed bill will increase expenses above the current operational expenses.

In summary, the University of Hawai'i opposes HB 1940 HD 1 because graduate student assistants are students first and because of the significant cost implications for the State, the University, and the state's taxpayers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



JAMES K. NISHIMOTO  
DIRECTOR

CINDY S. INOUE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII  
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET, SUITE 1201  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

February 8, 2016

TESTIMONY TO THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
For Hearing on Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
2:00 p.m., Conference Room 309

By

JAMES K. NISHIMOTO  
OFFICE OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, CHIEF NEGOTIATOR

**House Bill No. 1940, HD1  
Relating to Collective Bargaining**

CHAIRPERSON CHOY, VICE-CHAIR ICHiyAMA AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE  
COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION:

H.B. No. 1940, HD1 would establish a collective bargaining unit for graduate  
student assistants employed at the University of Hawai'i (UH).

The Office of Collective Bargaining **DOES NOT SUPPORT** this bill for the  
following reasons:

- Unlike other employees, a graduate student's employment is temporary and is not a career or profession.
- Establishing UH graduate students as collective bargaining unit 15 could have significant cost increases for both the UH and the State since mandatory subjects of collective bargaining cover wages, hours, conditions of employment,

and fringe benefits.

- The effective date noted in this bill is July 1, 2091.

Based upon the above, the Office of Collective Bargaining respectfully requests that this measure **be held**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Date: February 9th, 2016  
Time: 2:00PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Representative Isaac Choy, Chair  
Representative Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jonathan Dial, and I am writing on behalf and as the President of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) Graduate Student Organization (GSO), which represents the approximately 5,000 graduate students at the UHM campus. I am writing in strong support of HB 1940, which seeks to secure collective bargaining rights for graduate assistants at UH.

As you know, the role of graduate assistants is integral to the university's operation. They teach, research, and perform administrative work, but they are unfairly compensated for their labor and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. Regardless of the elimination of the bottom steps of the pay scale for graduate assistants in 2013, the pay rate for any of the steps has not increased since 2003/2004. The current base pay (\$17,500/year) is just fifty-one percent of the cost of living in Honolulu for graduate students, declared by the University to be nearly \$34,000/year in 2012. Given that these positions are intended to serve as means through which students can earn a living wage while pursuing their education, this is a major problem for graduate students. Furthermore, the relatively short duration of these positions, while sometimes pointed to by critics as a rationale for graduate assistants not needing collective bargaining rights, actually make these employees more vulnerable to exploitation. We also find that a climate of fear of retaliation amongst many graduate assistants leads them to refuse to speak out, especially in the forms of formal grievances or Congressional testimony.

These circumstances deter potential students and are also likely responsible for many students' decisions to leave UH and the state. Indeed, graduate student enrollment has significantly declined in recent years. Attempts by the GSO to improve these circumstances, especially pertaining to compensation, have been flatly denied by administration. Even a one-time adjustment in pay would not guarantee that similar problems would not continue to arise in the future. Through collective bargaining, this vulnerable population would be able to protect and promote its own interests, while simultaneously protecting the future of post graduate higher education for the state. Based on these reasons, we strongly support HB 1940.

Thank you,

Jonathan Dial  
UH Mānoa Graduate Student Organization, President

Graduate Student Organization • University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Hemenway Hall 212 • 2445 Campus Road • Honolulu, HI 96822

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Anna Belew, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I am lucky enough to have received a graduate assistantship in which I am treated well and compensated fairly. However, I know that not all graduate assistants here at UH are so lucky. I believe that it is essential for graduate assistants to have the right to bargain collectively in order to ensure their just treatment; and unjust treatment of graduate student assistants impacts the entire UH learning community in deeply negative ways.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Belew  
belew@hawaii.edu



Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Jesi Lujan Bennett, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Jesi Lujan Bennett  
jesilb@hawaii.edu

I strongly support the passing of HB1940. Having been employed as graduate assistant at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, from 2013-2015, I found on several occasions issues that made my study, and employ more difficult than it should have been. Had there been a stronger graduate assistant support system in place, starting with collective bargaining, my employ would have been wrought with less financial burdens and poor working conditions. The state of Hawai'i lags far behind other states in terms of graduate student employment rights. Please let us remedy this.

Mahalo

Brandon M Genco

Date: Tuesday, February 2, 2016  
Time: 9:30 AM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Labor  
Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair  
Representative Jarrett Keohokalole, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Jeanette Hall and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

As a graduate assistant for the past four years, it has been impossible for me to meet the cost of living in Hawai'i, despite working multiple jobs. My teaching assignments in particular have required working hours far above the hours for which I've been compensated. Graduate students are a necessary part of the university, and their labor is often invisible. This also makes it incredibly challenging to complete our degrees in a timely fashion, given the addition of multiple part-time jobs necessary to make ends meet. The need for us to collectively bargain is essential. The poor treatment of graduate students has gone on for too long.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Hall  
halljt@hawaii.edu

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education

Representative Isaac W. Choy, Chair

Representative Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Keohokalole, and Members of the House Committee on Labor and Public Employment,

My name is Ed Hoogland, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Graduate assistants at UH perform essential functions, such as teaching and research, yet are paid poorly. In a 2012 survey conducted by the UHM Graduate Student Organization (GSO), 90% of respondents indicated that their wages do not cover the cost of living in Hawai'i. Furthermore, graduate students have little job security, since they are rehired each year, and sometimes each semester. They also are not afforded sick days or family leave. As a result, sick graduate student employees risk being fired if they choose to stay home in order to avoid spreading illness to students. There is a real fear of retaliation.

The right to organize used to be an honored one, not one taken for granted or carelessly written off based on age, occupation or number of hours worked. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa employs about 2000 graduate students as teaching assistants. We depend on this income for survival. In the recent past, the university has taken the easier method of balancing the budget by keeping its graduate assistants (GAs) as casual labor with no right to appeal unjust release. Please help grant GAs collective bargaining rights so that they can potentially form a union and write a fair collective agreement. When disputes occur, neutral mediators can arbitrate them. The alternative is a poor image for

the university, where student teachers have to demonstrate just to be heard by the administration. A more equal power relationship leads to better agreements, harmonious working conditions, and stability.

If we think of the employer-employee relationship like a marriage between equals, then the correct decision is clear: fair treatment through collective bargaining for honest work done on campus. In a marriage where only one person makes decisions by decree, we call it abusive. When will we stop the abuse of student teachers?

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Hoogland  
EH30@hawaii.edu

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education

Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair

Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

I am a graduate student in the department of physics. I am engaged in a state of the art neutrino experiment which leads me to travel to the east coast many times a year. Long hours and dedication are expected as a physics graduate student and I accept this as part of the ritual of getting a Phd. However, as I enter my 5<sup>th</sup> year of studies I have come to recognize, along with every single other graduate student in my department that something is terribly wrong.

Even with “summer overload” (this is extra pay you can obtain by working summers as a graduate student) my pay is **8000 dollars under the poverty line**. If you factor in the fact that Hawaii is an extremely expensive state, I cannot house or nourish myself properly. Many graduate are homeless and eat nothing but bread, cheese, rice or other cheap starchy foods. Considering the fact that our jobs provide cheap highly skilled labor for the university that provides mountains of income for our university, this is nothing short of shameless.

I myself have been told by my department to only write a maximum of 20 hours a week into my hourly time-sheet even though I usually work 60 to 84 hours a week. In fact, in my last three trips to Washington I worked 12 hours a day for three weeks straight and was told that I could not have any breaks, as we always seem to be undermanned and under a great deal of scheduling pressure. Again, this kind of dedication is a lot easier when your not struggling to eat or pay bills.

As a consequence of our shameless pay and lack of worker rights, we have lost so much talent in the last few years as top students have avoided our institution due to poor word of mouth concerning the working conditions. These problems are not insulated, as graduate students campus wide are having similar issues in their departments. An impression has gathered that departments have colluded to keep wages very low for graduate students.

Please help us and support this bill. It is not a far stretch to say that workers who are threatened, poorly paid, and without rights constitutes an unjust work environment.

I want to stress that I have the up-most respect for my supervisor and the faculty in my department for the opportunity they have given me. They are an extremely talented group of professors. Many of them

have expressed their distaste at the practice of the institution. I believe that this bill is the best thing not only for us, but for the faculty, the University, and for Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration,

-John Koblanski

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 07, 2016 5:49 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** momo.modus@gmail.com  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM\*

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/7/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Laura	Individual	Support	No

### Comments:

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Teresa LeMoon and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa LeMoon  
tlemoon@hawaii.edu  
808-202-7247

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Dear Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education,

Below is my testimony which I delivered last week at the House Committee on Labor.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Viacheslav Li, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH). Due to the current/upcoming hearings I would like to express one more time my strong opinion that graduate Teaching&Research assistants at the University of Hawaii should be allowed to form a union. It will make University of Hawaii education&research better, UH graduate schools more competitive, and might potentially lead to the stipend increase (currently ratio of physics GA stipend/cost-of-living is among the lowest in the US). The proposed bill should have a hearing. GAs at the University of Hawaii should be allowed to form a union.

Below is part of my testimony I provided the Board of Regents of the UH, at their meeting more than a year ago (Fall 2014). The situation has not been improved, I would say it has gotten worse. It is my 5th year being a physics graduate student at UH Manoa, and I am homeless being at the highest possible pay rate (according to some non-written physics department policies being on top of the university policies).

Little that I knew how UH is far from most of other U.S. university standards before coming to Hawaii. Once I was very close to changing a grad school but decided to stay mainly due to the very unique project I am working on which is related to a non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

It is well-known that living expenses in Hawaii are extremely high. If I knew how hard it would be I would choose another grad school (with similar level of very good research) despite research being so awesome here. Honolulu is the 3rd most expensive city in the U.S., technically 2nd (two other places Brooklyn and Manhattan are in New York)  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/10-most-expensive-cities-in-america/4/>  
For one person, it is the most expensive metro area in the US  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/get-there/wp/2015/08/26/the-most-expensive-cities-in-the-u-s-for-single-people-and-families/>

Most American grads are taking student loans, rely on their savings (if any) and/or support from their families.

Ratio stipend/expenses is the lowest among US physics grad schools. Student fees have been steadily increasing, including outrageous athletics fees.  
Cost of the dorm&meal plan is larger than allocated in the I-20 form, and larger than a stipend most

graduate assistants receive. Probably UH is disregarding some of the US federal laws.

Personally, I am not able to afford even to fly back home once a year living on a stipend. People like Tom Apple (got fired), William Ditto (resigned), Steven Rabinow (resigned), Pui Lam have been fighting for students, made some actual change which is still very small to do actually fix the big problem.

Tom Apple, in particular, played a crucial role in making positive changes for the school observed by students and faculty, and me personally.

We haven't received the clear reason for giving "unsatisfactory" grade to Chancellor Apple by Lassner. I would like to give Lassner "unsatisfactory" grade, and call for an impeachment to the current UH president, and propose to reinstate Tom Apple as a chancellor of UH Manoa. JABSOM, cancer center are financial black holes and loops in our University.

Teaching over the summer with less positions than grad students doesn't give you opportunity to survive in expensive resort area.

Tutoring \$10/hour, 5 hours a week -- a maximum amount of overload I am allowed to work as a foreigner.

It is an impossibility to apply for most scholarships being non US citizen. It is an impossibility to take student loans for most international students, and an impossibility for most incoming foreign students open credit card bank account.

As a foreign student, I cannot even opt-out health insurance (I pay more than \$200 a month).

It should have been at least mentioned in the acceptance letter that grad student should expect their spendings to be \$10,000-\$20,000/year more than the provided stipend .

My job requires a lot of skills, and being paid at or below minimum wage is a humiliation, personally to me and to academic society as a whole.

As a final remark, current UH administration has too much power while the core of the University -- faculty and students -- people who care most about the School -- has almost no power. That is the main problem of this School. Moreover, current UH administration doesn't want to listen to concerns raised by many faculty and students. At the same time some of the tenured PIs are often held non-accountable. Beginning of the chaos?

It is especially very sad and unfair to people who work on the big projects which bring money to the University, like the one I am working on.

For this reason I strongly support the bill.

Sincerely,

Viacheslav Li, MSc,  
Graduate Research Assistant  
Department of Physics and Astronomy  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
2505 Correa Road, Honolulu, HI 96822  
vli2@hawaii.edu  
808-230-5251

Date: Sunday, February 7, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Hannah Liebreich and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I support this bill on behalf of all of my fellow graduate students who are graduate assistants (GA's) because currently, we do not have long-term contracts that provide job stability including benefits such as healthcare. Gaining the right to collectively bargain will ensure that GA's receive job stability and better working conditions overall.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Hannah Liebreich  
[hannahli@hawaii.edu](mailto:hannahli@hawaii.edu)

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309  
To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I was once employed on a quarter-time graduate assistantship which amounted to a half-tuition waiver and roughly \$600 a month. There were no better job opportunities at the time for me. I feel now, in retrospect, that the inability to unionize can lead to abuses of graduate student workers. I know other grad students who work far more than the maximum of 20 hrs/week for their graduate assistantships or TA positions (myself included). This extra work is simply required, yet no overtime is paid.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Tamara Luthy  
PhD Student  
Departments of Botany and Anthropology  
University of Hawaii at Manoa  
3190 Maile Way  
Honolulu Hawaii 96822

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 06, 2016 12:33 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** aamcguig@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/6/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Ashley McGuigan	Individual	Support	No

Comments: My name is Ashley McGuigan, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH). Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940. Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion. Respectfully submitted, Ashley McGuigan aamcguig@hawaii.edu

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Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

From: Amy McKee

RE: Strong Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Aloha, my name is Amy McKee and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. I write to you in **strong support of HB 1940** to grant collective bargaining rights to part-time and full-time graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawai‘i.

Being born and raised in Hawai‘i, I grew up with a few lessons:

- Don’t try to go west bound at 5:00PM on a Friday,
- It’s a small island,
- Do what is best for our keiki and kupuna,
- Practice aloha ‘āina, and most importantly,
- If you want to be successful—don’t got to UH! Go to the Mainland.

The first four lessons regard our community and way of life, acknowledging a symbiotic relationship between the people of Hawai‘i and its land. Yet the last lesson does a disservice to our community, which begs the question, why don’t we take pride in our state public higher education system? Is it because of tangible issues such as the management of the university’s funds, or because we don’t feel the university can produce educated individuals? Regardless, we’re too invested in the university to break it down and start from scratch. So if we want to change our local, national, and global perspective on education in Hawai‘i, we must start with targeting the group that produces the research and knowledge in our scholarly community, and earns us prestige—graduate students.

The research, scholarship, and creative endeavors of graduate students are what makes UH Mānoa a world-class institution and earns us the enviable “very-high research” Carnegie Classification. We have 5,176 total graduate students (57.80% are tax-paying residents of Hawai‘i); approximately 1,300 are graduate assistants who receive a tuition waiver and a meager stipend for their assistance on research projects, teaching courses, or in administrative capacities.

However, the overall graduate student enrollment has decreased by 14.12% within the last five years (n=851). Given this decrease in graduate student enrollment, we must ask ourselves why? While undergraduate enrollment has also decreased (5.07% over the last five years), administrators jokingly explain it is due to the increase in degrees awarded (17.18% over the last five years) based on first-year retention programming efforts. This same argument cannot be used for graduate students (degrees awarded has dropped 15.13% over the last five years). The administration continues to prioritize undergraduate student issues (specifically first-year

students) over graduate student issues, and has been slow to investigate this severe drop in graduate student enrollment and retention.

The statistics I present suggest that graduate students are intentionally leaving UH Mānoa, and the State of Hawai‘i is losing potential research and scholarship that could benefit our communities. We are also losing the revenue benefits. If those 851 graduate students re-enrolled at UH Mānoa at least half-time (6 credits) this year and paid resident tuition rate (\$593/credit), we’d receive \$6.05M in tuition revenue (perhaps this could help athletics?).

If graduate assistants are able to collectively bargain, they could be strong advocates to turn things around at UH Mānoa. We’d also want to:

- Negotiate to raise the stipend pay scale given to meet cost-of-living standards in Hawai‘i,
- Advocate for new graduate assistant positions to be created,
- Negotiate to receive sick leave and family leave, and
- Demand an end to exploitive graduate assistant labor practices.

Although personally as a graduate assistant I have never felt exploited or mistreated, I certainly don’t make enough to move out of my parent’s house or pay off my existing undergraduate student loan debt. As the Academics Chair of the Graduate Student Organization I have heard the stories of others experiences as a graduate assistant. Here are two of my most recent cases:

- Two students contacted me to file a grievance. They said they were heavily recruited by a department at UH Mānoa with the promise of full-funding and the chance to work on groundbreaking research. They left their previous institutions and four years later, still have not received funding for their equipment (they need to purchase an MRI). These two currently face probation because they are not meeting good academic progress.
- Three students contacted me because their funding was unexpectedly pulled; a transition occurred in the department they were in and because the faculty member in question was no longer in the position, the funding disappeared with her, leaving the three students with incomplete research projects and nowhere to go.

In both instances, the students had already completed their coursework and needed to do their data collection for graduation. Since their funding was pulled, they could not collect their data thus stalling their academic progress and putting them in jeopardy of being on probation. Now you may be wondering—why don’t they find new a new project to research? It’s not so simple. A lot of planning goes into a research endeavor (at least 2-3 years) and if the time-to-degree allotment is only 7 years, these students have already wasted more than half of it. If they are unable to remedy their funding situation, there is no other solution but to drop out. As the Academics Chair, all I can do is provide them with resources to advocate for themselves. There is no university-appointed representative to support them and typically with academic grievances you may not bring in legal counsel. The ability to collectively bargain would be of tremendous help to these students, and ensure future contracts are upheld.

Thank you for your time and consideration; I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Ke aloha,  
Amy McKee



Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Jennifer Michalski. I am a graduate student studying entomology at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

The passing of this bill is of critical importance to the survival of graduate students at UH Manoa. Many graduate students move thousands of miles away from home to pursue the laudable goal of completing an advanced degree at UH, but are met with ambiguous terms of employment. Notwithstanding, we contribute a substantial amount of teaching hours, research, and support to the academic community. This contribution marks a great sacrifice due to the minimal compensation we receive. Finishing a degree under these circumstances can be insurmountable. I am one of many who are questioning the completion of an advanced degree due to less than ideal compensation.

This bill grants us protection, recognition, and VALIDATION as employees of the University of Hawaii at Manoa. It provides personal and professional stability, and gives us back some of the sanity we lose each semester. I strongly encourage you to give a voice to the graduate students at UH, and support HB 1940.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinions in regard to this critical legislative movement.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Michalski  
Email: Jrmichal@hawaii.edu

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 08, 2016 9:14 AM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** mIn2@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM\*

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mika Nakashige	Individual	Support	No

### Comments:

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Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Penn Pantumsinchai, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I have had the opportunity to be a Graduate Assistant and a Teaching Assistant during my graduate studies at UH. While I have learned a great deal from both these positions, each time I suffered some troubling working conditions. I was only making a third of the appropriate living wage at UH and had to seek external funding in addition to my appointments in order to make rent. While I was grateful for the opportunity to be a Graduate Assistant, my boss made the working conditions very stressful. There was no oversight for the amount of hours I worked. Even though I was contracted to work 20 hours a week, I easily worked 30 or 40 sometimes, particularly when my colleagues were let go and I was forced to take on the extra work load without extra compensation. There were also no set working hours so I found myself working past midnight many times trying to finish a last minute demand. These were very stressful working conditions that led to the deterioration of my mental well-being. It was difficult to negotiate for better conditions because I could easily not be renewed as my contract was up for review every six months.

These conditions made me feel unappreciated, despite the reality that graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Yet we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Penn Pantumsinchai  
[ppantum@hawaii.edu](mailto:ppantum@hawaii.edu)

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Kauahi Perez, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system. In addition, our research is of great benefit to the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research at local, national, and international levels, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties.

Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Kauahi Perez  
[bronsonp@hawaii.edu](mailto:bronsonp@hawaii.edu)  
(808) 230-9391

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 08, 2016 8:02 AM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** bp32@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM\*

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bret Polopolus-Meredith	Individual	Support	No

### Comments:

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Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Hilson Reidpath and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Having spent time taking courses in various departments and interacting with undergraduates and discussing their coursework, it is clear that graduate teaching assistants (GA) are an incredibly important part of the university. They provide valuable experience for the graduate students while also providing younger students not only an alternative source of knowledge but also critical comments and help inside and outside the classroom. I also understand, having been a GA for two semesters, how difficult it is to balance my coursework with teaching duties while also trying to supplement my income to maintain a reasonable living situation in Hawaii.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Hilson Reidpath  
[Hilson4@hawaii.edu](mailto:Hilson4@hawaii.edu)  
(808) 799-6854

Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Benton Rodden, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

In my capacity as Employment and Compensation Chair for the Graduate Student Organization (GSO), I have spoken with numerous graduate students about the grievances they have with the University. They fall into the following categories:

- Graduate Assistants are not provided guaranteed sick days and have been threatened with termination for calling in sick.
- Graduate Assistants are not provided paid sick leave and have threatened with unpaid sick leave if they do not check out of the hospital earlier than advisable.
- Graduate Assistants are routinely pressured to work overtime hours that they are not paid for.
- Graduate Assistants are, on average, paid two to six weeks late.
- Graduate Assistants are not permitted any parental leave.
- Graduate Assistants are not compensated enough to afford the minimum cost of living.
- Graduate Assistants are hired for short terms without the security of being rehired and with the knowledge that they may have their assistantship terminated midway through the academic year.

We seek collective bargaining simply because the above list of grievances represents the very issues labor unions have addressed for countless workers. For us, this is a very pragmatic decision.

Some have taken issue with the idea that graduate students are employees of the University. The majority of teaching assistants (TA) are in charge of teaching their own classes. They do all the grading and lecturing, as well as design the syllabus and maintain decorum in the classroom. Our research assistants are often working on independent projects of their own. Others are working in administrative offices performing the same duties as any administrative office worker. It is misleading to refer to us as anything other than a critical part of the UH workforce.

Some have taken issue with the temporary nature of our positions. I want to make



clear that we are here not in spite of this, but precisely because the temporary nature of our jobs places us in a position of particular vulnerability. Negotiating longer terms of employment would be a priority of any union that should form. Guarding against the exploitation of temporary workers ought to be a goal of this body as well.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

Benton Rodden  
206.229.0226  
bentonrodden@gmail.com

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 06, 2016 12:14 PM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** jwruss@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** \*Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM\*

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/6/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
John Walsh Russell	Individual	Support	No

### Comments:

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Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

My name is Susanthi Medha Kumari, Sabhapathi Mudiyansele and I am a PhD student in Economics and a Teaching Assistant for Economics at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

I have witnessed financial fraud and financial mismanagement at the University of Hawaii at Manoa relating to graduate student pay. I have notified the administration, but not only were all my revelations ignored, but I was badly harassed, abused and my rights for education taken away. I notified the situation to the Graduate Student Organization, and if we had collective bargaining rights, we could have achieved our basic rights for equal employment opportunity and fair remuneration. Not only that, we could have helped the University, the community of Hawaii and the USA by curbing financial fraud, mismanagement and waste at the University. We could have resolved the issues in a speedy manner. I have not been compelled to report this situation to the Federal Department of Education – Investigation Division and the Office of Civil Rights, which are still investigating the manner. I reported this also to the FBI.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Department (NREM) of UHM gave a tuition waiver (paid the tuition for) for a PhD student from the economics department for the Spring 2015 semester, when his services were terminated at the end of the Fall 2014 semester. The amount is about USD 15,000. The auditing function of the UHM has no whistle blowing procedure when I inquired them. When I notified this to the Judicial Affairs Authority on August 25, 2015, under the discrete and confidential online reporting system, I got no reply. When I did not get a response for my revelation, I called the Judicial Affairs Authority and I was told by Sabrina, who answered the call that “the NREM can do whatever they want with their money. If you want to complain about this student, complain to the NREM”. These were her own words. Since complaining about that student was not my intention, but fair and equal treatment of all graduate students applying for graduate assistantships was my intention, I emailed Lori Ideta, Deputy Title IX Coordinator and Vice Chancellor for Students on September 01, 2015. I did not state this matter through email. I simply asked for an appointment to meet her about a matter in connection to the Judicial Affairs Authority. She did not contact me about

it. However, I obtained a phone call on September 08, 2015, from Lori Idea's secretary, Jodi Chee. In Jodi Chee's own words "the NREM can do whatever they want with their money. It's their budget. If you want to complain about this student, complain to the NREM". I do not know how confidential information submitted through the secure online system of the Judicial Affairs Authority was divulged to Jodi Chee. I did not mention anything to the NREM.

On September 15, 2015, I received an email from the UHM's Title IX Coordinator, Dee Uwono to my email inbox. The Title IX Code of US Federal Legislature is about ensuring equal rights in education for all genders. Quoting from her email:

"Dear Ms. Sabhapathi:

In discussion with Mr. XXXXX, he discussed alleged stalking incidents. Based on what was reported, Mr. XXXX requested a No Contact/No Retaliation order. Therefore, this letter serves as an official directive that you have no contact with Mr. XXXXX. This includes,

but is not limited to, inperson, verbal, or written interactions, nonverbal gestures, "looks," and

any other means of communication and/or contact. Should you contact Mr. XXXX in person, by telephone, email, text message or other electronic means of communication, or through a third party (other than an attorney) our office will take immediate action.

Failure to comply with this directive constitutes retaliation and will result in disciplinary action,

including possible suspension or expulsion from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa .

If you have any questions, please contact my office at 9562299.

Sincerely, Dee Uwono

Director & Title IX Coordinator"

I Please note that I deleted the name of the complainant. When I received this email, I was extremely surprised because I have not been informed formally or informally, anything complaint or any adverse situation. I just received this to my email account. I questioned this practice. I also complained of this massive inconvenience this makes on my attending classes, seminars and performing my teaching assistant duties because the Mr. XXXX is a fellow student in the same Economics PhD program as me. When I got no response from Dee Uwono, I emailed the Dean of the College of Social Scienced, Denise Konan, and the Chancellor of UHM, Roberty Vroman and the President David Lassner. Their email addresses are publicly available. Denise Konan wrote back to me an absolutely wrathful email and ordered me to just comply. She threatened to take disciplinary action against me if I ever write to the President and Chancellor again. Quoting parts of her email:

"From: **Denise Konan** <[konan@hawaii.edu](mailto:konan@hawaii.edu)>

Date: Tue, Oct 20, 2015 at 10:50 AM

Subject: Re: Use of the Title IX email account by multiple persons

To: Medha Sabhapathi <[susanthi@hawaii.edu](mailto:susanthi@hawaii.edu)>

Cc: Sumner LaCroix <[lacroix@hawaii.edu](mailto:lacroix@hawaii.edu)>, Ross Sutherland

<[sutherla@hawaii.edu](mailto:sutherla@hawaii.edu)>

Dear Ms. Sabhapathi:

You are currently under a Title IX no contact order because of your behavior toward another student, which was allegedly violent. Your interaction with this student is rightfully curtailed.

Your tone and insistence with the Title IX officer is rude and disrespectful. Your demands on the office are unprofessional and threatening. Your emailing of the Chancellor and President in this affair are also clearly intended as a threat to the Title IX office and are not appreciated. Your recourse for concerns you have with the Title IX office are clearly noted in the Student Conduct Code. You are not following this code, and your emails constitute administrative bullying.

I must warn you that the College of Social Sciences does not tolerate harassing treatment of our students, faculty, staff or executives. If you fail to abide by my directive you may face disciplinary action.

Sincerely,

Denise Eby Konan

Dean of the College of Social Sciences  
Professor of the Department of Economics

University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Hawaii Hall 310  
Honolulu, HI 96822  
808.956.6570  
konan@hawaii.edu (e-mail)

The President and Chancellor did not answer any of my queries. The Office of Institutional Equity did not answer any of my queries either.

I was called into a meeting with the Title IX Coordinator and her staff assistant on September 18, 2015. I questioned about the practice of making allegations at students, never informing the concerned student what the allegations are, never giving the concerned student any opportunity whatsoever to respond to the

allegations and defend herself, and placing massive burdens on her educational opportunities. They were very offensive and told me that I am a dark female from a poor country and I should not question their practices and that I should just comply.

I discussed my situation with Ms. Jill Nunokawa, Civil Rights Specialist and former public defender of Hawaii. I showed her all my documentary evidence and she agreed that there was procedural error by Dee Uwono. She advised that I either complain to Court, or complain to the Office of Civil Rights – Department of Education (Federal).

On November 10, 2015, I again received an email to my email account from Dee Uwono. Quoting parts of her email,

“ Dear Ms. Sabhapathi:

Based on the complaint made by Mr. XXXX regarding allegations of stalking, we issued you a no contact order letter on September 15, 2015 and an amended letter on September 24, 2015, per your request, to change the date of your letter to September 15, 2015.

Therefore, due to the severity of your alleged actions of violating the no contact order on five different occasions (placing two letters addressed to you regarding the no contact order in Mr.XXXX 's mail box in the Economics Department office, placing two letters addressed to you regarding the no contact order and a copy of the Dear Colleague letter (2011) in Mr.XXXX 's mail box in the Economics Department office, showing up to his office on November 2, 2015, placing your emails on his

bicycle on November 2, 2015, and emailing him directly on November 3, 2015), you are hereby placed on temporary suspension from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, which excludes you from classes and other privileges or activities. In addition, you are trespass banned from all University property, to include Student Housing Services property. You are also prohibited from loitering near the entrances of any campus buildings, residence halls, parking lots, walkways, or courtyards. Loitering in these areas will be considered a violation of your trespass ban. Should you wish to enter campus, you must be escorted by Department of Public Safety officers at all times. Please contact the Department of Public Safety at (808) 956-8211 to make arrangements.

If you are found violating any of the above directives or involved in any future incidents, the Department of Public Safety and/or the Honolulu Police Department may be notified and will take action as appropriate. You will also be subject to disciplinary

action with the Office of Judicial Affairs. Your full cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Ms. Ronette Kawakami, Associate Dean of Student Services and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, School of Law, and Ms. Karen Blakeley, Assistant Director for Conduct and Community Standards and Deputy Title IX Coordinator, Student Housing Services, have been appointed to serve as Co-Investigators for this case.

Sincerely,  
Dee Uwono  
Director and Title IX Coordinator  
c: Dean Denise Konan, Social Sciences  
Chief Charles Noffsinger, Public Safety”

On November 17, the above two investigators emailed me the list of allegations, which repeated the above. In addition, their letter also contained the following:

In addition, in a related matter that is not the subject of Mr. complaint, but is a part of our investigation as a collateral violation, on October 20, 2015 and October 28, 2015 you allegedly violated University of Hawaii Systemwide Student Conduct Code, policy IV.B.8, which states: “Failure to comply with any directions of UH officials or law enforcement officers acting in performance of their duties and/or failure to provide identification to these persons when requested to do so.” On October 20, 2015, Dr. Konan sent an email message to you directing you to stop emailing the President and Chancellor regarding your matter. She also directed you to contact Associate Dean Ross Sutherland if you had concerns. However, on October 20, 2015 and October 28, 2015, you sent email messages to President David Lassner and Chancellor Robert Bley-Vroman.

Please note that until today (February 08, 2016), I have not been informed of the allegations against me. I still do not know why the no contact order was issued. I still do not know why the Title IX Coordinator Dee Uwono concluded I stalked somebody. Even by now, no formal or informal or written or verbal communication was made to me about the stalking allegations. I STILL do not know when they have supposed to have occurred, how they have supposed to have occurred or that the person complaining actually submitted a complaint. I checked with Campus Security and they had no complaints about me.

The investigation is still not complete. I received a B grade for FIN 702 and the Professor of that class wrote to me an email in which he said ““You should have received a better grade if you did not have to miss the classes.” I have not been able to attend any class. Moreover, 200 undergraduate students for whom I was a

teaching assistant suddenly lost a teaching assistant. My tuition waiver for the current semester that I am fully entitled to, has been denied for me. My student visa is dependent on my being registered for classes and I stand cancellation of my visa.

I keep inquiring but the University does not inform me when they will conclude their investigation. All proceedings are not at all transparent and without a time target.

I notified the Office of Civil Rights (Federal) about my situation and I constantly update the OCR about my situation as I am requested to do. The case numbers are 10162042 and 10152258 for your future reference.

This is a great example of lack of democracy and civilization in the USA in the eyes of us international students. However, just like we have achieved human rights in education in my motherland Sri Lanka, I urge Hawaii and USA to take one step at a time and rectify the issues at hand. Student Unions have collective bargaining rights in Sri Lanka. I am thankful that thus far I have been offered free and good quality education at this State.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Respectfully submitted,

**Susanthi Medha Kumari, Sabhapathi Mudiyansele**

**808-738-7663**



Date: Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 309

To: House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Maja P. Schjervheim, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) and Co-Chair of advocacy for the GSO. I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

During my time as Co-Chair of Advocacy for the GSO at UH Mānoa, I have met with and been approached by many GAs who are desperately seeking advice on how to cope with hours far beyond their contract, a lack of funds for basic living, and unpredictable or unsafe working conditions. Fortunately, there is also GAs who are treated well in their assistantships but these are still struggling with low wages that makes their life in grad school difficult, being one disaster away from not affording rent or food. However, the number of GAs who feel exploited and powerless in the UH system is shocking, as well as bad for the reputation of UH as a potential grad school for prospective new students. I want to give these students a voice because sadly many of them are reluctant to submit testimony because they fear the repercussions it will have.

I see three broad issues amongst the many graduate assistants who have had a hard encounter with their assistantships. The first is regarding wages that does not cover basic needs when you live in the increasingly expensive state of Hawai'i. This issue will be echoed by almost any GA you encounter. Moreover the students I talk to humbly do not expect more than decent, livable pay that resonates with the cost of food and housing. Furthermore I have not been able to find one student that has been offered even a possibility of getting a raise according to the pay scale. This means that when you evaluate the wage situation of GAs you should consider the higher steps of the pay scale inapproachable. GAs, including myself, cannot afford basic food and housing on GA pay and often cannot get a second job because of demanding hours in their GA ship!

That leads to the second issue of the extreme amount of hours many of UHM GAs are asked to work. Most contracts state that the GA is expected to work 20 hours a week. However the case for a large amount of GAs is that they are expected (often expressed explicitly) to work close to 40, 60 or even 80 hours a week on top of academic obligations. Such a workload is compromising the academic performance of students and keeps many from graduating at expected time. Moreover it is compromising their health and sanity! As a GA without a union you are completely powerless in resisting such demands. Those who try to ask for a workload closer to the 20 hour limit have

often faced threats of being laid off or have actually lost their GA ship, which is a tragic event for a student who cannot pay their tuition otherwise. If you are an international student, as I am, you will lose your student visa if you cannot get another GA ship instantly. Disproportionate GA work pressure also keeps graduate students from graduating which does not benefit Hawaii's economy.

The third issue that was expressed by many graduate assistants is the despair of working under unsafe or unstable working environments. A daunting amount of students have expressed having to put up with flaky or cruel bosses, arbitrary decisions, or harassment. By this I mean both the overhanging threat of losing your GA ship without justifiable cause as well as how power is abused by those who are in charge of the GAs. A certain power imbalance is of course expected, but the extreme power imbalance GAs are facing now cultivates a culture where it is "OK" to treat student workers poorly and exploitatively. Having a union would give GAs the support and security they need to have a safe and secure working environment.

This all comes down to decency and basic rights. Granting students the right to collectively bargain and form a union will offer them a way to collectively work for these basic rights. I can't tell you how powerless and in despair some of these students feel. They are in a position where they have the choice between taking poor treatment and unlivable wages or quitting school. This is not a real option! Just the fact that so many students are afraid to speak the truth in front of the legislators shows you that there is something wrong with the current system and that these students deserve to be able to form a union. These students are a priceless part of University of Hawaii Manoa and they deserve at least the chance to stand together for better conditions. Many brilliant and hard working students have already quit because of unbearable conditions, which is a shame as UHM is otherwise a great place to be for a graduate student. Please help us and give graduate students a voice.

Respectfully submitted,

Maja P. Schjervheim  
majaps@hawaii.edu

## ichiyama2-Brandon

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 08, 2016 10:52 AM  
**To:** HEDtestimony  
**Cc:** eteng@hawaii.edu  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1940 on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM

### **HB1940**

Submitted on: 2/8/2016

Testimony for HED on Feb 9, 2016 14:00PM in Conference Room 309

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Emily Teng	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I have been a graduate assistant in the past and am currently one again. The salary has not changed since I was one ten years ago. I couldn't live on that salary then and definitely couldn't live on it now. I have an additional job but that leaves me little time to spend on my full time studies.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

Do not reply to this email. This inbox is not monitored. For assistance please email [webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:webmaster@capitol.hawaii.gov)



**LATE**

The House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 9, 2016  
2:00 p.m., Room 309

**RE: HB 1940, HD1, Relating to Collective Bargaining**

Attention: Chair Isaac Choy, Vice Chair Linda Ichiyama and  
Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA) urges the committee **support passage of HB1940, HD1**, that amends Section 89-6 of the Hawai'i Revised Statute to advance the interests of graduate assistants. These employees are essential to instruction and research that contributes to the overall success of the University of Hawai'i. Graduate Assistants are employees in the full sense of the term with continuing access to positions based on job and academic performance.

UHPA supports the rights of graduate assistants to organize and collectively bargain. Such a right is consistent with the labor tradition in our state and is compatible with an academic environment whereby the majority of employees have access to representation.

UHPA urges **passage of HB1940, HD1**.

Respectively submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristeen Hanselman".

Kristeen Hanselman  
Executive Director

University of Hawaii  
Professional Assembly

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



**LATE**

WRITTEN ONLY

WESLEY K. MACHIDA  
DIRECTOR

RODERICK K. BECKER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND  
MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

**TESTIMONY BY WESLEY K. MACHIDA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 1940, H.D. 1**

February 9, 2016  
2:00 p.m.

**RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

This measure allows graduate students employed by the University of Hawaii (UH) to collectively bargain by amending Chapter 89-6, HRS, to remove the exemption from collective bargaining for graduate students employed by UH and authorizing a new Bargaining Unit 15.

The Department of Budget and Finance opposes this measure. UH has outlined several reasons why it is best to keep collective bargaining out of the management of these student-employees in their testimony. The cost implications of allowing graduate students to collectively bargain are a special concern, especially in UH's current fiscal situation.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309  
Tuesday, February 9, 2016; 2:00 p.m.

**STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON H.B. 1940, HD1  
RELATING TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

The ILWU Local 142 **supports** H.B. 1940, HD1, which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed at the University of Hawaii.

UH graduate assistants are entitled by law and the State Constitution to organize and form a union for purposes of collective bargaining. H.B. 1940, HD1 will create a new bargaining unit to allow graduate assistants the right to collective bargaining that other public employees enjoy. The fact that graduate assistants may not be employed in their positions for a long period of time should not deny them the right to be able to negotiate for wages, benefits, and working conditions as other public employees do.

The ILWU urges passage of H.B. 1940, HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this issue.



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

**LATE**

The Twenty-Eighth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
House of Representatives  
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 9, 2016

H.B. 1940, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the concept of allowing graduate student assistants employed by the University of Hawaii to be included in an appropriate collective bargaining unit, as proposed in H.B. 1940, H.D. 1.

Graduate assistants employed by the University have encountered numerous work related issues in the past, including budget set backs and increases in class size and workload, in addition to the high cost of living in Hawaii. The language proposed in H.B. 1940 is the most viable; as it not only removes the current exclusion of this group from collectively bargaining but also creates a unique bargaining unit with a dispute mechanism.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of H.B. 1940, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,

  
for Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



Randy Perreira  
President

# HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

345 Queen Street, Suite 500 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**LATE**

Telephone: (808) 597-1441

Fax: (808) 593-2149

The Twenty-Eighth Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Hawaii State House of Representatives  
Committee on Higher Education

Testimony by  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO  
February 9, 2016

H.B. 1940, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO  
COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly supports H.B. 1940, H.D. 1 which establishes a collective bargaining unit for graduate student assistants employed at the University of Hawaii.

Having the ability to collectively bargain will give University of Hawaii graduate students a unified voice to discuss their working conditions, wages, and a number of other benefits to help improve their quality of life and work environment. Collective bargaining will help solve workplace problems and provide a grievance process to ensure each situation is handled appropriately and fairly. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO strongly urges the passage of H.B. 1940, H.D. 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira  
President



**From:** Marguerite Butler <[mbutler808@gmail.com](mailto:mbutler808@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 10:31 AM  
**To:** Rep. Isaac W. Choy; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of HB1940

Testimony in support of HB1940

Dear Chair Isaac Choy and members of the Committee on Higher Education:

I write to you in full support of HB1940 and the right of graduate students to organize under a collective bargaining unit. I fully believe that the ability to unionize will be of material aid to graduate students in obtaining fair and equitable working conditions.

As a faculty member who actively recruits graduate students to come study at UH Manoa, I have been frustrated for many years regarding the treatment of graduate student workers. Graduate students do valuable work. Indeed we could not carry out our teaching and research missions without them. They bring to us great talent, intellect, energy and creativity. They are not merely assistants, but take on increasing responsibilities in teaching and the development of research programs. In short, they quickly become colleagues. It is in our interest to treat them as professionals as we only benefit from the increased caliber of their work.

When I arrived at UH 9 years ago, I was shocked and appalled at the low wages and poor treatment of graduate students. Many students take jobs outside of the university in order to subsist. Sometimes they take 2 or 3 jobs. Bringing the best and the brightest to UH only to end up working in restaurants and bars does no one any good. It certainly does not contribute optimally to the undergraduates that they also teach, to their graduate education, their work quality, nor to their physical or mental health. I am tired of hearing about graduate students who opt out of health insurance because they simply cannot afford it. For those graduate students with families, the problems only intensify.

This sad state of affairs truly hurts our ability to recruit the best and the brightest. When they receive better offers from other universities (nearly every other offer is better), it is impossible for UH to compete.

I have tried my best as an individual faculty member to take care of my own students. I supplement their TA income to bring it to a livable wage. However, this is very difficult without institutional support, and is entirely dependent on my ability to obtain outside funding. What happens is that I split a research position among two students who are TA's in order to supplement their income. Teaching is extremely time-consuming, and this arrangement compromises research output. It is not a good system, but it is my only means of supporting students.

Being a graduate student is not a 9-5 job. There are classes to take, classes to teach, and research to be done. All of this can take 60 hours a week or more. If we continue to pay such sub-standard wages to our graduate students, we will turn it into something achievable only by the independently wealthy, driving out most students by economic attrition. It is unconscionable to pay such sub-standard wages to our graduate students who work long hours to support teaching and research at UH.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Marguerite Butler  
[mbutler808@gmail.com](mailto:mbutler808@gmail.com)

Associate Professor  
Dept. of Biology  
2538 McCarthy Mall, Edmondson 215

University of Hawaii  
Honolulu, HI 96822

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Marguerite A. Butler  
Associate Professor

Department of Biology  
2538 McCarthy Mall, Edmondson Hall 216  
Honolulu, HI 96822

Office: 808-956-4713

Dept: 808-956-8617

Lab: 808-956-5867

FAX: 808-956-4745

<http://manoa.hawaii.edu/biology/people/marguerite-butler>

<http://www2.hawaii.edu/~mbutler>

ichiyama2-Brandon

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**LATE**

**From:** Sarita Rai <sarita@hawaii.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 10:34 AM  
**To:** Rep. Isaac W. Choy; HEDtestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in support of HB1940

Dear Representative Choy:

I am in support of HB1940

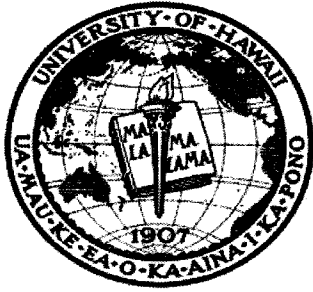
Sarita Rai, Ph.D.  
Director  
University of Hawai'i at Manoa Study Abroad Center

[www.StudyAbroad.org](http://www.StudyAbroad.org)  
[www.facebook.com/uhmstudyabroad](https://www.facebook.com/uhmstudyabroad)  
[twitter.com/uhmstudyabroad](https://twitter.com/uhmstudyabroad)

"Dare to Discover, Dare to Learn, Dare to Understand"

LATE

LATE



The University of Hawaii, Manoa  
Department of Physics and Astronomy  
Professor John Gregory Learned

2505 Correa Road  
Honolulu, HI 96822 USA  
fax: 01-808-956-2930  
phone: 01-808-956-2964  
email: [jgl@phys.hawaii.edu](mailto:jgl@phys.hawaii.edu)

9 February 2016

House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

***Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining***

Dear Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and Members of the House Committee on Higher Education:

This is a letter of support for the legalization of union representation for the graduate students. The inability of the GSO at UH to organize as is true of all other employees at UH, is unfair and should be redressed, the sooner the better. Many have spoken to this, but as a researcher and teacher at UH, I want to emphasize the importance of this matter in our being able to attract the best students to UH, particularly in the graduate program. We need good students for knowledgeable and enthusiastic TAs, and we need top notch students to participate in great research. You all know the story of how excellent research feeds into the quality of education at a Research One university such as UH.

It is fair, it is smart for education in Hawaii, and I hope you will push through this bill this year.

Thanks for your attention. Sincerely,

---

Professor John G. Learned

**LATE**

February 9, 2016

House Committee on Higher Education  
Rep. Isaac W. Choy, Chair  
Rep. Linda Ichiyama, Vice Chair

Re: Support for HB 1940 Relating to Collective Bargaining  
Time: 2:00 PM  
Location: Conference Room 309

My name is Mark Duvall, and I am a graduate student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM). I am writing in strong support of HB 1940 to grant collective bargaining rights to graduate students employed by the University of Hawai'i (UH).

Collective bargaining is necessary because grad students currently have little means available for improving our situation on a broad scale. Many of us regularly work 60 hours per week or more, leaving very little time for campaigning to improve our circumstances. This also makes it unrealistic to get a second job, meaning that virtually all UH grad students live far below the approximately \$30,500 / year living wage for a single adult in Honolulu as calculated by MIT (livingwage.mit.edu). Like many others, I am proud of the research I'm doing at UH – I'm a physicist working on nuclear nonproliferation – but I am often frustrated by the conditions we face here and the apparent lack of any effective machinery to change them. The current situation is bad enough that my peers and I have advised some talented prospective graduates that they would be better off studying elsewhere. This needs to change.

Graduate students are an integral part of the UH system and the local economy. While attending UH, we constitute a committed learning community, do important research, and perform a substantial proportion of the teaching duties. Unfortunately, we are poorly compensated and are vulnerable to exploitation and poor treatment. As individuals, we stand little chance of success in demanding better treatment and compensation, and the long history of failed attempts at improvements proves this to be true. Our only hope for improving our own situations, then, is to collectively bargain with the University administration. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to support HB 1940.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to express my opinion.

Regards,



Mark J. Duvall  
mjduvall@hawaii.edu